

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jason E. Brown, County Administrator

FROM: Dan Russell, Information Technology Director

SUBJECT: Broadband Feasibility Study Proposal – Magellan Advisors

DATE: May 12, 2021

CONSENT

BACKGROUND:

The pandemic has created an environment in which many of the citizens of United States of America, including those in Indian River County, FL, have the need to work and/or attend school from their home. This situation makes reliable broadband communications from the home a requirement rather than a luxury for many people. Staff was asked to examine options for increasing the availability of broadband communications within Indian River County with a focus on rural and underserved areas of the County.

ANALYSIS

Staff has examined approaches taken by other communities as well as attended webinars focused on this topic. The approaches taken by others vary widely and are not yet mature enough to determine the success of any specific approach. Therefore, staff recommends conducting a feasibility study with the objective of determining low cost and effect ways for the County to improve the local broadband environment. The approach taken should first assess the existing environment to create a clear understanding of the current broadband supply and demand with specific focus on rural and underserved communities. The study should seek to identify the key broadband issues and gaps impacting Indian River County residents and business. The information collected should be used to create a broadband needs assessment and that assessment should be forward looking in it's consideration of Indian River County's community development, smart city and economic strategies that will require high-speed broadband communications as a part of their foundation.

The study should detail the options for improving the broadband environment based on the available infrastructure assets, resources and public policy tools. The options provided should be based upon:

1. Alignment with Indian River County's vision and priorities
2. Benefits to each community
3. Total costs to the County and options for funding including Grants/Loans
4. Long-term financial sustainability
5. Operational requirements
6. Technological risk
7. Participation of service providers
8. Competitive risk
9. Control
10. Probability of overall success

Based on these criteria and others that may be discovered while the study is being conducted, the study should recommend the most feasible options with a roadmap and strategies for implementation of the most desirable options.

Staff has identified an RFP for a broadband feasibility study from the City of Clermont, FL that was awarded to Magellan Advisors, LLC that appears to meet the requirements outlined above. Purchasing has reviewed that RFP and determined that it aligns with our procurement standards and can be piggybacked. Staff has requested, received and reviewed the attached proposal from Magellan Advisors and believes that Magellan Advisors' approach will result in a study that meets the requirements outlined above.

FUNDING

Funding in the amount of \$74,500 for the broadband study will be funded from the County's American Rescue Plan Act allocation.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners approve the proposal submitted by Magellan Advisors for this broadband study. Staff further recommends the Board leverage the City of Clermont RFP for these services and authorize the Purchasing Division to issue a Purchase Order to Magellan Advisors, LLC in the amount of \$74,500.00. Finally, Staff recommends the Board Authorize the County Administrator to execute any agreements necessary for these services after the County Attorney has approved them as to form and legal sufficiency.

ATTACHMENTS

Magellan Advisors, LLC Broadband Feasibility Study Proposal

DISTRIBUTION

Kristin Daniels, Director Management and Budget